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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/15/08

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ARTICLES:

- (1) Japanese diplomacy left in the lurch

Prime Minister Aso on October 11 was told by U.S. President Bush that the U.S. would remove North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. He was out of town on business at the time. He was not with a secretary, who is temporarily dispatched from the Foreign Ministry, or an interpreter. He replied to the call from the president, using the cell-phone of a secretary dispatched from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The delisting of North Korea that day was absolutely a bolt out of the blue for the Japanese government.

The telephone conversation between the two leaders lasted for about 10 minutes from 11:30 p.m. on the afternoon of the 11th (Japan time). Secretary of State Rice had signed a paper to endorse the decision to remove that nation from the blacklist about three hours before that phone call. President Bush's phone call came 30 minutes before the formal announcement of the decision was made.

Aso was staying in Hamamatsu City in order to attend the national convention of members of the Japan Junior Chamber to be held on the 12th. A certain senior Foreign Ministry official stated: "There will be no removal today. The U.S. cannot possibly do that without telling Japan beforehand."

Aides to the prime minister became busy around 11:00 p.m. When the prime minister was having chats with previous JC chairmen at a hotel lounge, his secretary's cell phone rang. It was a call from the Foreign Ministry, asking whether there was a telephone that could be

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connected to a phone call from President Bush. The secretary had to tell them the number of his own cell phone.

When he was told that President Bush was calling, the prime minister excused himself from the drinking party and went to another room through the backdoor of the lounge. Telephone conversations between chiefs of states are usually held at places with secure facilities, such as the Kantei, with the presence of a senior Foreign Ministry official in charge or a special interpreter. However, the telephone conversation that day took place with a speaker attached to the cell phone and a government official present serving as an interpreter, while taking notes. A person who was present at the telephone conversation said, "Since we did not expect such a phone call, we were in a flurry. Since there happened to be two officials who had a good command of English, there were no problems." Winding up the telephone talks with the president, the prime minister went back to the party in the lounge.

(2) Japan should offer due contributions to North Korea's denuclearization

By Hajime Izumi, professor at Shizuoka Prefectural University

The U.S. delisted North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. The U.S. must have come to this judgment that continuing the negotiations on the North Korea nuclear issue was indispensable, even if it meant the Bush administration would have to make concessions to the North. North Korea then agreed to allow experts to access to all declared nuclear facilities, but mutual consent will be needed for undeclared sites. Washington certainly yielded with concessions to Pyongyang.

I visited Washington in late September. While staying there for about one week, I met officials and policymakers in the Bush administration to exchange views. Around that time, it was reported that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il was suffering serious health problems. Through the discussions, I keenly felt that it would be extremely undesirable from the viewpoint of the U.S. for Kim to become incapacitated.

The Bush administration fears that if Kim became unable to make

policy decisions, Pyongyang might terminate its nuclear negotiations with the U.S. Seeing North Korea resuming operation of its Yongbyon reactor in September, the U.S. was even more wary of such a possibility.

In response to Washington's delisting, North Korea has resumed steps to disable its nuclear reactor. With this development, prospects are in sight for the second phase of the disabling of existing nuclear facilities to be on the threshold of completion by the end of the year.

After hearing the news that Washington had de-listed North Korea, views could be heard in Japan deplored that the nation had lost influential leverage to use in resolving the issue of North Korea's past abductions of Japanese nationals. People are worried about future developments in negotiations on the abduction issue. But it is necessary to cool-headedly recognize the following two points.

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The first point is that even during the period when the U.S. included North Korea's insincere attitude in dealing with the abduction issue among the reasons for its recognition of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, there was no progress on the abduction issue. This shows that the delisting will not have a negative impact on Japan's efforts to resolve the abduction issue.

The second point is that the U.S. Senate approved on Sept. 22 a bill amending the North Korean Human Rights Act. The bill includes a provision mandating North Korea to seriously address the abduction issue. By amending the law, the special envoy for human rights was empowered, with the position's status upgraded to the rank of ambassador. A part-time position was also promoted to a full-time position. The amended law also requires approval from the U.S. Senate for appointments to the post, involving the Congress more in the selection of a special envoy.

The North Korean Human Rights Act will remain in force after the Bush administration leaves office. The legislation guarantees the U.S. will continue to work on North Korea to take action in resolving the abduction issue. We should not forget the U.S. commitment to helping Japan settle the issue.

For the next administration, no matter who becomes president, Barack Obama or John McCain, the first priority task to tackle in dealing with North Korea's nuclear program will be removing to outside the country some 8000 spent fuel rods from which about 8 kilograms of plutonium can be extracted.

If the rods are left in North Korea, that country could produce one or two nuclear weapons. There is even the possibility that the products might be sold to terrorists.

The spent fuel also could enable the North to conduct several nuclear tests through which it might master the technology needed to produce a miniaturized nuclear weapon. In such a case, once the DPRK can produce a miniaturized warhead, its possession of nuclear-armed missiles would take on a touch of being a real possibility. North Korea already has deployed Nodong missiles with a range that covers all of Japan. If Nodong missiles are replaced by nuclear-tipped missiles, Japan will be exposed to a serious military threat.

If fuel rods are removed from North Korea, Japan's safety will be largely ensured. It is estimated that 300 million dollars, or approximately 30 billion yen, would be needed for this task. To carry out this feat would surely contribute to Japan's security, I think Japan should be willing to foot the bill.

The Japanese government has persisted with the stance of not offering energy and economic aid to North Korea before progress is made on the abduction issue. The U.S., China, South Korea, and Russia have already extended energy aid worth approximately 150 million dollars, or about 15 billion yen, but Japan has offered nothing to the North.

Removing fuel rods from North Korea is not assistance to North Korea

but a means of reducing the nuclear threat to Japan.

Needless to say, Japan should continue efforts to move negotiations on the abduction issue forward. But the security issue should be considered separately from the abduction issue. It is conceivable that Japan will be pressed to take such a stance once the

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denuclearization process is on the right track, as a result of the delisting decision.

(3) Inside story on delisting of North Korea: Secret deal to delist the North on Oct. 10 suspected; President made decision after judging that the North showed cooperative stance

SANKEI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
October 15, 2008

By Takashi Arimoto, Washington, and Makiko Takita, Foreign News Department

A rumor is afoot among members of the Six-Party Talks that there was a secret deal between Washington and Pyongyang for the United States to delist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism on Oct. 10. There is no doubt that the United States rushed to delist the North in an effort to avoid a deterioration of the situation, such as another nuclear test by North Korea. However, Japan, in view of its abduction issue, objected to the delisting, saying that leaving an ambiguous situation would end up creating problems in the future. The matter has exposed once again a gap in views between the United States and Japan over the North Korean situation. The newspaper probed into what took place behind the scenes.

The U.S. Department of State initially informed the press corps that it would hold a press conference at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 11 (10:30 p.m. Oct. 11, Japan time). The event was soon changed to 11 a.m. (midnight Oct. 12, Japan time). That was because priority was given to allow President George W. Bush time to inform Prime Minister Taro Aso of the decision to delist the North and seek his understanding over the phone.

Around 8:00 p.m. Oct. 11, Japan time, U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer informed the Japanese government with a sense of urgency that President Bush would like to talk to the prime minister on the phone. The hours generally coincided with the time when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed a document to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

According to a diplomatic source, the U.S. government had initially made arrangements to announce the delisting on Oct. 10. The U.S. plan was derailed by resistance coming from the Japanese government. In his telephone conversation with Secretary Rice on the morning of Oct. 10 (night of Oct. 10, Japan time), Foreign Minister Hiroyuki Nakasone sought a cautious decision, saying that a draft agreement on verification, put together by Assistant Secretary of State (for East Asian and Pacific Affairs) Christopher Hill during his trip to North Korea earlier this month, contained some points that need to be confirmed.

"We will continue talks"

Before delisting the North, President Bush ordered Secretary Rice and others to obtain Japan's understanding. The President was aware of Japan's concern over the delisting via direct reports from Ambassador Schieffer. Speculation spread temporarily that given Japan's reluctance, the delisting would not take place on the weekend. Aboard the Air Force One for Florida on the afternoon of Oct. 10, White House Press Secretary Dana Perino, too, said: "We will continue talks with other Six-Party members."

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Developments began to unfold from the evening through the night of Oct. 10 (morning of Oct. 11, Japan time). According to a U.S.

government source, President Bush decided to delist the North after reaching the conclusion through additional exchanges of views via a New York channel -- a liaison route with North Korea with which the U.S. has no diplomatic ties -- that North Korea was exhibiting a posture to cooperate on the verification process. Secretary Rice informed the two presidential candidates -- Republican Senator John McCain and Democratic Senator Barack Obama -- of the President's decision to delist the North.

A Six-Party Talks source made this comment about the announcement on the weekend: "To North Korea, Oct. 10, which marks the foundation day of the Korean Workers Party, carries great significance. There seems to have been a secret deal between the United States and North Korea on announcing the delisting on Oct. 10." The Washington Post mainly ascribed the delisting to widespread speculation that the North might conduct a second nuclear test.

President Bush's series of words and actions point to the stance of placing high priority on relations with Japan. But in the end, the President accepted the policy course chosen by Secretary Rice and Assistant Secretary Hill who ultimately wanted to achieve diplomatic results by disabling the North's nuclear facilities.

Rice did not show up at press conference

Bearing the brunt of criticism from Japan which opposed the delisting, Assistance Secretary Hill at one point lashed out at a senior Foreign Ministry official: "Japan has been objecting to the delisting. Why don't you make your own list of state sponsors of terrorism? In such a case, can you designate Iran (a major oil exporter to Japan) (as a state sponsor of terrorism) ahead of other countries?"

When he met in May a delegate to the United States that included members of the Association of the Families of Victims of Kidnapped by North Korea, Hill also said emotionally: "There is an Iran Air office near the U.S. Embassy Tokyo. In Iran, U.S. diplomats were held hostage. An old friend of mine was one of them. He still suffers from mental anguish from the experience. What do you think of that?"

There is concern in the United States that the decision to delist the North would adversely affect its relations with Japan.

In the Oct. 11 press conference on the delisting, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Sung Kim urged North Korea to take action to resolve the abduction issue, while indicating, "We have continued intensive talks with all participants (in the Six-Party Talks), especially with Japan." Neither Secretary Rice nor Assistance Secretary Hill showed up at the news conference.

(4) U.S. removal of DPRK from terror blacklist creates ripple effect on Japan-U.S. alliance

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 15, 2008

The U.S. government's removal of North Korea from the list of states sponsoring terrorism is having a lasting effect on Japan, since the timing was unexpected. Voices of concern about the impact on the

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Japan-U.S. alliance are being raised one after another, with even Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama saying, "It revealed that the United States does not necessarily attach too much importance to Japan."

Foreign Minister Nakasone, speaking in the Upper House Budget Committee on Oct. 14, rebutted such views: "It is not true that the United States carried out a decision without regard for our wishes." He intends to make another appeal on such issues as the importance of the abduction issue when he meets Secretary Rice in Abu Dhabi on Oct. 18.

So far, Japan has been tossed back and forth as the U.S. and North Korea engaged in diplomatic tactics. At the time of the nuclear

crisis of 1993, there was even talk within the Clinton administration of air-striking North Korea, but with the signing of the Agreed Framework between the U.S. and the DPRK in 1994, the second Clinton administration strengthened its conciliatory posture toward that country, and then Secretary of State Albright even visited Pyongyang. The U.S. greatly swung back and forth. There was no progress on missiles, an issue of concern to Japan.

During the first term of the Bush administration, the neoconservatives, who wanted regime change in North Korea, were influential, and a hard-line stance stood out. But during the second term, the hard-line stance petered out when the administration became mired in Iraq policy. There was a strong impression that results on the North Korean front were being sped up.

During this period, not only was the abduction issue left unresolved, North Korea proceeded to deploy mid-range ballistic missiles, and the security environment around Japan continued to worsen. The Tokyo Foundation, in a recently announced set of security proposals, pointed out: "North Korea over the past 10 years has improved its missile capabilities and has come close to the stage of being able to use them to launch nuclear weapons. The scale of destruction would be exponentially greater than before."

Japan's basic strategy of comprehensively resolving the nuclear, missile, and abduction issues has as its greatest aim to make sure that the United States and China - powers that have the strongest influence on North Korea - will not be able to ignore the abduction issue. In that sense, at the point when the abduction issue was folded into the framework of the Six-Party Talks, Japan's strategy was halfway toward reaching its goal.

The U.S. government has stressed that sanctions against North Korea still remain, and urged Japan not to exaggerate the importance of the delisting steps. The U.S. also stressed that there has been no change in the importance of resolving the abduction issue. It is true that once its name was removed from the terror blacklist, North Korea announced that it was resuming the work of disabling its nuclear facility, and there has been a bit of progress on the abduction front.

However, the psychological impact of the delisting cannot be underestimated. A top official at the Foreign Ministry lamented yesterday: "The U.S. does not realize that very much." If confidence is shaken in the Japan-U.S. relationship, the threat from North Korea can only grow. It is therefore urgent that trust be rebuilt between the two countries.

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(5) Three weeks since Aso cabinet inaugurated; Kantei staff members set in full motion

SANKEI (Page 4) (Full)
October 13, 2008

Three weeks will soon pass since the cabinet of Prime Minister Taro Aso was inaugurated. The Aso cabinet was initially deemed a caretaker government to prepare for a general election. Aso, however, has taken a stance of forgoing the dissolution of the House of Representatives and the calling of a snap election. The Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) staff members, whom Aso picked on his own, will go into action on a full scale. The Sankei Shimbun has looked into Aso's policy image based on his selection of people to staff the Kantei.

Surprise appointment of Kawamura as chief cabinet secretary

The appointment of Takeo Kawamura as chief cabinet secretary was seen as a surprise. Kawamura is a Lower House member elected in the Yamaguchi No. 3 district. He is now serving his six-term in the Diet. It is unusual for a prime minister to pick his chief aide from another faction. Kawamura belongs to the Ibuki faction. Aso and Kawamura share only thing in common: they both belong to the educational policy clique in the Diet. The main reasons for Aso having appointed Kawamura are his personal channels to the

opposition camp and his strong election base, allowing him to stay in Tokyo during the election campaign, according to a person close to Aso. However, one cabinet member pointed out: "Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is a longtime ally of Aso, proposed Kawamura. Abe and Kawamura hail from the same prefecture (Yamaguchi)."

Aso picked Jun Matsumoto and Yoshitaka Konoike to serve as deputy chief cabinet secretaries for political affairs. Matsumoto, who is a Lower House member elected in the Kanagawa No. 1 district, is now serving his third term in the Diet. Konoike, an Upper House member elected in Hyogo Prefecture, is in his third term in the Diet. Matsumoto is the closest aide to Aso. It is said that Aso listens to Matsumoto's opinions in a serious manner. The prime minister often has dinner with him.

Aso and Konoike have known each other since they were members of the Japan Junior Chamber of Commerce (JJC). The two at one time have headed the JJC.

Aso appointed former National Police Agency Director General Iwao Urura as deputy chief cabinet secretary for administrative affairs in place of Masahito Futahashi, former administrative vice minister for the defunct Home Affairs Ministry. The post had been served by officials from the former Health and Welfare Ministry and the former Home Affairs Ministry. The appointment of a NPA official is an exceptional case, following Hiromori Kawashima as deputy chief cabinet secretary in the Tanaka and Miki cabinets. A source connected to the Kantei said: "The prime minister highly evaluated Urura's effort to deal with such difficult issues as North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals."

Increase in secretaries unprecedented

The increase in the number of secretaries to the prime minister is a major distinction. The secretaries to the prime ministerial used to

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be made up of one veteran secretary for political affairs and four secretaries for administrative affairs coming from the Finance Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the National Police Agency. Aso has now picked an official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications as a secretary.

Masakatsu Okamoto, former vice minister for policy coordination of the MIAC, served as director general of the Local Allocation Tax Division during Aso's tenure as minister for MIAC. It is said that Okamoto gained Aso's confidence during that time. Aso also picked Shunichi Yamaguchi, a Lower House member elected in the Tokushima No. 2 district and former postal rebel, secretary to the prime minister on revitalization of the local economy, as well as former Kitakyushu Mayor Koichi Sueyoshi as cabinet secretariat counsellor.

Aso also added two assistant deputy chief cabinet secretaries -- one for internal affairs and the other for foreign policy -- who are at the same level as administrative vice ministers. Chikao Kawai was replaced in less than two months by Keiichi Hayashi, then deputy vice-minister of the Foreign Ministry's Minister's Secretariat due to differences in foreign policies of former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and Prime Minister Aso, according to some political observers.

An aide to Aso said: "The prime minister was very fussy in selecting on his own the Kantei staff members." They are known as "Team Aso." The Kantei lineup thus was completely changed. Compared with the former Fukuda cabinet, the Aso cabinet's unity appears to be solid. A veteran LDP lawmaker commented: "I wonder if the Kantei staff members are all yes-men" Some in the LDP are concerned about the possibility of return of the likes of the former Abe cabinet, which was ridiculed for being a "cabinet of good friends."

Lineup of Kantei staff members

Prime Minister Aso
Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura

Deputy chief cabinet secretaries: Matsumoto
Konoike
Urura
Special advisors to the prime minister: Kyoko Nakayama (on the
abduction issue)
Shunichi Yamaguchi (on revitalization of local economy)
Assistant deputy chief cabinet secretaries: Susumu Fukuda (Finance
Ministry)
Keiichi Hayashi (Foreign Ministry)
Kyoji Yanagisawa (Defense Ministry)
Secretaries to the prime minister Ichiro Muramatsu (Aso office)
Masakatsu Okamoto (ex-Home Affairs Ministry)
Masatsugu Asakawa (Finance Ministry)
Kazuyuki Yamazaki (Foreign Ministry)
Tadao Yanase (METI)
Nobuyuki Muroki (NPA)

(6) Rocky road ahead of post-Kyoto Protocol framework: Can Japan's
proposal obtain support at cabinet-preparatory meeting for COP14?

ASAHI (Page 6) (Full)
October 11, 2008

A cabinet-level preparatory meeting for the 14th session of the
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Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP14) to be held in Poznan, Poland is set to be held on October 13-14. The Japanese government wants to stir up discussions on a framework designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions that would replace the Kyoto Protocol with a new proposal for mandating key developing countries, such as China and India, to set emissions reduction goals.

The new proposal divides developing countries, which currently have no obligations to cut carbon emissions, depending on the stages of their economic development. Key developing countries will be asked to set efficiency goals with binding power -- one to be achieved by main industry sectors and the other to be achieved by those nations' economies as a whole. Remaining developing countries will be sought to submit action programs and to verify emissions reduction efforts on a regular basis.

A certain Foreign Ministry officials proudly noted, "Japan has come up with a proposal, which no other country has been willing to articulate. You can't possibly stop global warming under the present conditions, in which none of the key developing countries have any obligations to make efforts to cut carbon emissions."

China, which was made the target of the Japanese proposal, submitted a paper insisting that dividing developing countries into more detailed categories runs counter to the treaty. It is determined to oppose the proposal. It is also against the sector-specific approach, which Japan advocates, saying that such an approach should be for the sake of technology transfers from industrialized countries to developing countries and that it is unacceptable for such an approach to lead to setting reductions targets.

Japan had also proposed that developing countries that are members of the OECD, such as South Korea, and countries with large GDPs, such as Singapore, should be categorized as developing countries. In response, South Korea and South Africa have come up with a proposal for a system of internationally approving developing countries' efforts to cut carbon emissions by registering their activities with the UN. Their proposal is noteworthy of attention as a new move. Singapore is also insisting that it should be allowed to make a voluntary pledge for emissions cuts, with consideration given to its conditions, such as that it is a small country and has high population density.

Japan during the COP14 meeting intends to call on all countries to agree on the long-term target of at least halving the total carbon emissions by the world by 2050, as agreed upon at the G-8 in Hokkaido. However, developing countries are insisting that industrialized countries should cut 25 PERCENT -40 PERCENT by 2020 and 80 PERCENT -95 PERCENT by 2050.

The goal the EU has put up is that industrialized countries should cut emissions 30 PERCENT by 2020. Its stance regarding the post-Kyoto framework is that it is necessary for developing countries to take action to cut carbon emissions. Based on that stance, it has proposed a plan to compensate developing countries for their emissions reduction efforts, according to the degree of achievements. Its proposal does not include punishments, either. However, it has no new proposals. The U.S., where the Bush administration is in the closing days, has made only an abstract proposal that more discussions should be pursued on what the shared vision is.

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Japan has clearly confronted key developing countries with a distinctive proposal. Environment Minister Saito did not take part in the preparatory meeting because of Diet deliberations. How many countries will agree on Japan's proposal is unclear.

(7) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

NHK plans to return 10 PERCENT of subscription fees to viewers starting in fiscal 2012

Mainichi, Yomiuri and Nikkei:

U.S. to inject 25 trillion yen into financial institutions, including nine major banks

Tokyo Shimbun: Hachioji health office detects dichlorvos 30,000 times the residue standard in beans from China

Akahata:

Medical insurance premiums to be withheld from pension benefits for 6.25 million aged 75 and older today

(8) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

(1) Stock prices bounce back
(2) Death of MSDF member: Organization must be improved

Mainichi:

(1) Professional baseball world must not dampen high spirits of youths
(2) Newspaper week: Door to information must be open

Yomiuri:

(1) Stock market rebound not end of crisis
(2) Newspaper week: Newspapers must continue to serve as compass of times

Nikkei:

(1) Emergency concerted action must be highly effective

Tokyo Shimbun:

(1) Countries around world must reconfirm unity in taking steps to stabilize financial markets
(2) Japanese doctor abducted in Ethiopia: Safety must come first

Akahata:

(1) U.S.-triggered financial crisis must not take toll on people

(9) Prime Minister's schedule, October 13

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 15, 2008

09:49

Walked around his private residence in Kamiyama-cho.

16:00

Me with Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura, Public Relations Headquarters Chairman Furuya at LDP headquarters. Had photo session for and taped message for public relations.

18:29

Met again with Kawamura and Furuya.

18:43

Met with Finance Minister Nakagawa and Kawamura.

19:47

Met with secretaries at Imperial Hotel.

22:49

Returned to his private residence.

Prime Minister's schedule, October 14

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

October 15, 2008

07:32

Met at Kantei with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Konoike.

08:36

Attended cabinet meeting in Diet building.

09:01

Attended Upper House Budget Committee session.

12:03

Met at Kantei with Economic and Fiscal Minister Yosano and Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura.

13:00

Attended Upper House Budget Committee session.

16:50

Met with Finance Minister Nakagawa and Kawamura.

17:27

Met at Kantei with Special Advisor Yamaguchi, followed by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma.

18:28

Met with BOJ Gov. Shirakawa.

19:08

Met with Uruma, followed by Foreign Ministry Economic Affairs Bureau chief Otabe and Finance Ministry International Bureau chief Tamaki.

21:08

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsumoto and Assistant Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yamaguchi at the bar Majiri in Roppongi.

23:20

Returned to his private residence.

SCHIEFFER